DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 397 FL 012 851

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TITLE A Comparison of Latin American and United States Bilingual Education Programs.
PUB DATE 23 Oct 80
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the I.N. Thut World Education Center Centennial Colloquium (Connecticut, October 23, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Aymara; *Bilingual Education; Bilingualism; Comparative Analysis; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; English; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Language Planning; Legislation; Policy Formation; Quechua; *Sociocultural Patterns; Spanish
IDENTIFIERS Bolivia; Ecuador; Peru; United States

ABSTRACT

Bilingual programs and the socio-cultural circumstances surrounding the programs of the United States are compared with the programs and socio-cultural circumstances of three Latin American countries: Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. The legal frameworks are different. In the United States, bilingual education acts and subsequent programs came as a result of legal challenges by private citizens. In contrast to this, in Latin America the institutionalization of bilingual education programs began with the incentive of the national governments. There are differences in administration, goals, relative status of the languages involved, relative distribution of monolingual and bilingual populations, and cultural-historical backgrounds. In the United States a large number of different social processes are reflected in the various bilingual situations, while in the Latin American case, two historical factors are dominant. These differences mean that the socio-cultural attitudes that members of language communities have toward other languages and their use are an important factor in the stance toward bilingual education programs. Implications are discussed in terms of the final linguistic state of the societies in question and the degree of mutual versus unidirectional influence of the languages involved. (AMH)

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# A COMPARISON OF LATIN AMERICAN AND UNITED STATES BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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AND INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

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FL012851

Presented at the I.N. Thut World Education Center Centennial Colloquium at the School of Education, the University of Connecticut, on October 23, 1980.

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# A COMPARISON OF LATIN AMERICAN AND UNITED STATES BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Liliana Minaya-Rowe

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## I. Introductory

Although in the history of the societies of the world, multilingualism has been a frequent fact of social life, in modern nation states the idea of publicly-sponsored bilingual education is relatively new (cf. Zirkel 1978).[1] It has been motivated by different political and ideological considerations in different countries, received variously, and produced different outcomes in the societies involved.

While it is not my intention to provide a thorough cross-cultural review of bilingual education policies and programs here, I would like to present a comparison of the bilingual education programs and the socio-cultural circumstances surrounding the programs of the United States and three Latin American countries: Perú, Bolivia and Ecuador. Bilingual education programs in the United States and these three Latin American countries were established at about the same time, but, as they emerge from different socio-cultural political circumstances, they make an interesting comparison.

First, I will review the legal frameworks of the Latin American and the United States bilingual education programs, the processes of their establishment and their implementation. Since these two phenomona do not exist in a vacuum --i.e. unrelated to any other socio-cultural matters-- I will, then, present a look at the socio-cultural (including the historical)

contexts out of which they grew and which they, consequently, reflect. Finally, I will consider some of the differential effects each are having in light of their stated aims and inferrable long-term goals.

## II. The United States and Latin American Bilingual Education Programs: Legal Frameworks and Their Establishment.

The legal frameworks of the Latin American and the United States programs look to be quite similar on the surface. In the United States the current national Bilingual Education Act, in the words of Parker (1978)". . . gives official federal and/or state sanction or recognition to providing special educational services to limited-English-speaking (LES) or non-English speaking (NES) students." Likewise, the Latin American legal frameworks for bilingual education, which were set in place in 1972, 74 and 76 instructed the Ministries of Education to initiate programs to ". . . provide instruction in their own language to students who come to school speaking little or no Spanish".[2]

However, if one looks at the processes --the means by which these laws came to be in the U.S. and Latin America-- we begin to see the tip of the iceberg of the socio-cultural background differences involved.

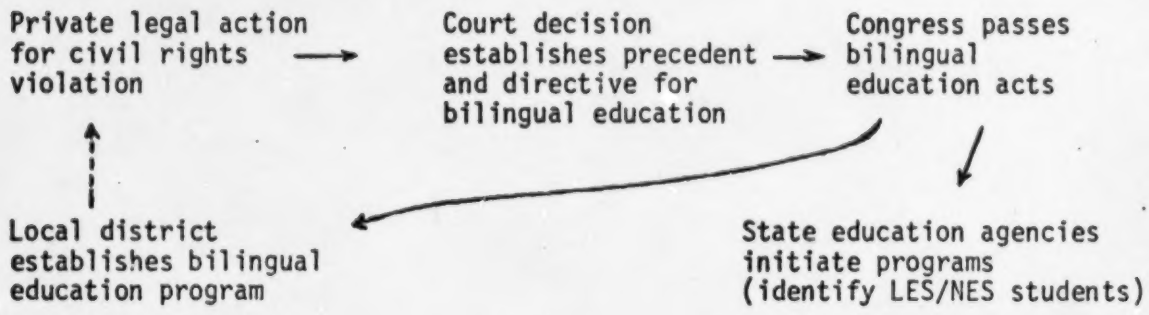
In the United States, while there have been scattered historical instances of, usually private but occasionally public, bilingual education programs in bilingual communities (cf. Andersson and Boyer 1978), the initial national sanction for such programs came through the Bilingual Education Acts of 1968 and 1974. These were in turn stimulated by the court challenges brought by citizens or citizens' groups claiming discrimination on the basis of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The 1964 Civil Rights Act, in turn, was engendered by court decisions brought by plain-

tiffs claiming discrimination on the basis of violation of their rights to equal educational opportunity as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

In other words, there would be no bilingual education acts and probably only private or miniscule public programs in the United States were it not for the individual efforts of private citizens challenging an existing state of social affairs in relation to an abstract principle voiced in the Constitution. Furthermore, it is evident that not just one challenge and one precedent-setting decision has been sufficient to establish bilingual education programs nationally in the United States. This process has had to be repeated in the various localities where bilingualism or non-English monolingualism (e.g., Spanish monolinguals) is present. The first court decisions led Congress to pass the education acts which directed the establishment of bilingual education programs. However, even with this law on the books, subsequent actions have been necessary to get programs started in specific localities or challenge the validity of the program of a specific school district as conforming to the aims of the court-directed mandate. Currently, we can see a secondary process with the incorporation of State policies for implementation of the Act. In some states, State Education Agencies have taken the responsibility for identifying target populations for bilingual education programs.

Thus, the establishment of bilingual education programs in the United States has taken the two stages described above. These can be seen in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1


Private legal action for civil rights violation
Court decision establishes precedent and directive for bilingual education
Congress passes bilingual education acts
Local district establishes bilingual education program
State education agencies initiate programs (identify LES/NES students)

The conditions surrounding and the factors motivating the inception of current bilingual education programs in Latin America have been quite different from that just outlined above for the United States. The first major difference is that the initiative for establishing the present program came solely from the central government and not from court actions initiated by individual private citizens on the basis of notions of violated civil rights.[3] Prior to the Latin American Education Acts, there were no legal suits brought by citizens claiming that their basic rights to equal educational opportunity had been violated by the failure of the school to teach in their native language. There is, in fact, no law in Latin America comparable to the United States Civil Rights Act of 1964. Nor is there anything equivalent to the United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment.

While there has been a tradition of positive government policy toward bilingual education programs in Latin America, in order to account for the current motivation to establish such comprehensive bilingual education and the innovative form those programs are taking, we must look solely at the socio-political ideology of the Latin American governments of the seventies.

which include the following as goals for the society.

(1) The achievement of political, economic, and cultural independence in the international community.

(2) To achieve this, they perceived as necessary the socio-political integration of the heretofore unintegrated non-mestizo populations.

In other words, to become economically developed, technologically advanced nations, the current Latin American governments feel they cannot to without having a polity --i.e., a national citizenry-- which includes all sectors of the population.

In order to achieve this second goal, it was seen to be necessary to better integrate the populations linguistically and, consequently, to establish new bilingual education programs thrcugh the bilingual education acts.

Thus, we can see the pattern of process in the institutionalization of the current bilingual education programs in Latin America, in contrast to that of the United States, in the following illustration.

FIGURE 2

Central government administration establishes social ideology

↓

Central government administration establishes bilingual education policy and act

↓

Ministry of Education:

(1) formulates bilingual education programs
(2) researches local community needs
(3) establishes bilingual education programs at local level

Not only is there a tremendous difference between the United States and Latin America in the way bilingual education acts and program get initiated, but these differences can also be seen as related to the implementation and administration of the programs in the following ways.

(1) In the United States, the responsibility for initiating bilingual education programs rests with the state education agencies and local school boards. In Latin America, the decision to establish a bilingual education program in any given community is made by the central government after it has undertaken research-reconnaissance to determine the needs of the local communities.[4]

(2) Related to this fact is the way in which federal government versus local school districts participate in programs already underway. In the United States, the major objective of the federal government is with funding, as both Molina (1978) and González (1978) have mentioned. Funding provided, of course, only at the initiative of a school district or individual (e.g., for a research project on bilingual education). But in the case of Latin America the responsibility of the central government, through the Ministries of Education, extends to planning and administering the entire program; the government does not give funds to local school districts and individuals to administer; it administers them.

Thus, in the United States, we get a wide range of variation in the kinds and quality of bilingual education programs from one state to another because the initiative in both establishing and planning them is left in the hands of local school districts officials. Within the United

States system, this has also meant that room is left for further litigation if the program does not satisfy the minority language community's felt civil rights to equal educational opportunity.

From this description, it might seem that the Latin American case is totally centralized and might produce programs which are inflexible in response to local needs. But when we look at the criteria for qualifying teachers and selecting materials it appears otherwise. In the Latin American system, a teacher in the bilingual education program (Quechua and Spanish or Aimara and Spanish) must:

(1) be a native speaker of Quechua or Aimara;[5]

(2) have been born and raised in the region;

(3) have taught in rural areas of the region;

(4) be a fluent Spanish speaker.[6]

In addition, in Latin America, the creation and selection of instructional materials in the different localities is the responsibility of the local bilingual program teachers and teacher trainers. This permits teaching flexibility which corresponds to the areal dialects.

In order to see the difference in the meaning of bilingual education programs in Latin America and the United States, we need to mention the relative status of the languages involved. In the United States, there is just one official national language: English, and numerous non-official languages. In Latin America, in 1975 and 1977, Quechua and Aimara were made national languages co-equal with Spanish. In concrete terms, this meant:

(a) The adoption of official alphabetic writing systems for Quechua and Aimara and committment to a Quechua and Aimara literacy

program as part of the bilingual program through the researching and preparation of reference grammars and dictionaries;[7]

(b) The use of both Quechua or Aimara and Spanish on radio, on news, music, festivities of one specific city, local accomplishments through cooperative government-local effort, etc.

An initial response to these differences in the two bilingual education programs might be to say that of course they are different because they grew out of totally different facts of bilingualism in the United States and Latin America. That is, one might say that because the contact situation in Latin America has been predominantly between only three languages: Spanish and Quechua and Spanish and Aimara, it is more easily resolved than in a situation like the United States where there have been only small pockets of monolingual and bilingual minorities speaking a wide range of languages in addition to English, while the vast majority of the polity is English monolingual. Thus, we could not reasonably expect that official co-equal status could be given to any one of the multitude of minority languages spoken in the United States.

The differences in facts of formal structure involving the bilingual education programs and their operation in Latin American and the United States, in statuses of the languages involved, and in the relative distribution of monolingual and bilingual populations are not all the differences we can account for. If we take a closer look at the socio-cultural differences in the two societies, we will see how the history of meanings about languages and their speakers <u>both</u> produced these situations toward which bilingual education programs now respond <u>and</u> the thinking in terms of which the programs do respond.

III. Cultural-Historical Background of Contact and Language Attitudes in the United States and Latin America

A. The United States Case. If we had a motion-picture cartograph of the language distribution and contact in North America roughly corresponding to the geographical boundaries of the United States from the initial stages of European immigration through the present, we would see something like the following.

1. A stage of intrusive European language communities -English, Spanish, French, Dutch, etc.- during the 17th and 18th centuries, in contact with American-Indian languages in various, usually widely-separated locations.

2. A stage from the late 18th through the 19th centuries, during the first part of which English is made the official national language of the newly-formed political entity occupying the eastern seaboard and extending increasingly inland. During this period we can see three important processes occurring.

   (a) The American-Indian languages in contact with English begin to disappear from an ever-expanding area. Most, simply, cease to be spoken though a few, like the Cherokee, move westwards to escape the inevitable results of that contact.

   (b) Also during this stage we can see the continued formation on a large scale of what was to become the only other major variant of English: Black English, initially developed from a different language base. The emergence of Black English could be observed throughout the southern half of the United States.

(c) A third process taking place during this time which is the gradual yielding of other European language communities to the pervasiveness of English as these communities become increasingly incorporated into the United States polity. This process can be seen in areas like Florida, the southern parts of the Louisiana Purchase and the Dutch-speaking portions of New York.

3. A new kind of contact situation intensified during the late 19th and early 20th centuries between established communities of English speakers and groups of newly-arrived speakers of other languages: Norwegian, Italian, German, Swedish, Polish, Yiddish, Chinese, Japanese, etc. In these cases, we could see initially non-English monolingualism shifting to usually one and-a-half-generational bilingualism and finally English monolingualism. However, for some groups of immigrants, for example Chinese-speakers and some Yiddish-speakers, who had continuous immigration and a localized community, their language has remained with rather more stable bilingualism.

In addition, the westward expansion of the late 19th century brought new contact with older, established communities of non-English speakers, most notably the Spanish speakers of the West and the Southwest.

Thus, currently, we have not one, but a large number of different social processes being reflected in the various bilingual situations extant in the United States: the English-Black English contact situation; contact with the remaining, though numerically

attenuated native-American Indian-language communities; and those situations like the English-Spanish or English-Chinese contact where the non-official language is represented by a long history of existence within the United States and where there is a wide range of dialects in which it is spoken.

B. The Latin American Case. Although the indigenous populations of the areas which are now Ecuador, Bolivia and Perú do represent a number of culturally-distinct groups, speaking forty-five languages of ten linguistic families (a population of around 9 million people: 6.5 million Quechua speakers, 1.5 million Aimara speakers, principally in Bolivia and Southern Perú, and approximately 1 million other language speakers in the jungle), two historical factors have served to reduce the present situation to one of contact between two major languages.

1. Quechua was the language spoken natively by the largest number of people indigenous to the Andean area before European contact.
2. Quechua was also the official language of the Incas Empire and by virtue of this fact had developed as a lingua franca over the entire area of what is now Ecuador, Colombia, Perú, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina.

Thus, the bilingualism of Latin American contact has involved, ideologically, only two languages: Spanish and Quechua. This fact has had two important results. Although Spanish is currently monolingually spoken by the majority of about 30 million Peruanos, Bolivianos, Ecuatorianos, it is only the slim majority: 60%.

Quechua on the other hand, is monolingually spoken by a large minority: 22%. An additional 10% of the population are bilingual Quechua-Spanish speakers. However, these figures, which are for the entire three countries are somewhat misleading, because of the geographical distribution of the languages. Most of the monolingual Spanish speakers and bilingual Quechua-Spanish speakers are concentrated in the coastal areas and/or state capitals in the highlands. If we look at the highlands districts, the percentage of monolingual Quechua speakers rises to between 87 and 95% and the number of bilingual Quechua-Spanish speakers correspondingly drops to between 5 and 15%.

If we had a graphic-historical representation of the Latin American situation over time parallel to that we have outlined for the United States, we would see something like the following:

1. A stage of intrusive European colonization during the late 16th and 17th centuries between a group of Iberian-Spanish speakers (socially españoles) and speakers of Quechua and other indigenous languages (socially nativos).
2. A period from the 17th through the 18th centuries saw a gradual, though expanding, social merging of the two original populations, españoles and nativos. It also saw the emergence of a new social-ethnic category. The social product of the original two ethnic categories involved in the contact situation, españoles and nativos, was the mestizo.
3. The political revolutions of the 19th century saw the establishment of a national identity --Peruano, Ecuatoriano, Boliviano-- distinct from that of the inhabitants of the

Iberian Peninsula. It also saw a continued growing emergence of and cultural dominance by the socio-ethnic category of mestizo. This was accompanied by a parallel development of a Latin American Spanish language which became increasingly distinct from Iberian Spanish. This process has continued and intensified itself during the 20th century.

A comparison of the terms for ethnic categories of person corresponding to the language identities of those categories in the two societies demonstrates the differences in thinking about their relation to the nature of social person.

FIGURE III

Taxonomy of ethnic categories of social person in the United States, in conjunction with language identities.[8]

| | Ethnic identity | Language |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | American (national identity) | English |
| 1.1. | American | English |
| 1.2. | Mexican-American | (Mexican) Spanish (± English) |
| 1.3. | Chinese-American | Chinese (± English) |
| 1.4. | Italian-American | Italian (± English) |
| 1.5 | Japanese-American | Japanese (± English) |
| 1.6 | - etc - | |
| 1.7 | | |
| 1.9 | American Indians | |
| 1.9.1 | Navajo | Navajo (± English) |
| 1.9.2 | Apache | Apache (± English) |
| 1.9.3 | - etc - | |
| 1.9.4 | | |

FIGURE IV

Taxonomy of ethnic categories of social-person in Perú, Ecuador and Bolivia, in conjunction with language identities.

| Ethnic identity | | Language |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Peruano<br>Boliviano (national identity)<br>Ecuatoriano | Spanish and/or Quechua |
| 1. | Mestizo | Spanish and/or Quechua |
| 1.2 | Nativo/campesino | |
| 1.2.1 | Quechua | Quechua |
| 1.2.2 | Aimara | Aimara |
| 1.2.3 | Campa | Campa |
| 1.2.4 | Yagua | Yagua |
| 1.2.5 | - etc - | |
| 1.2.6 | | |

Figures III and IV exemplify, in the first columns, some of the terms of socio-ethnic categories of persons in the United States and Latin America, and in the second columns, the way in which these correspond to language identities. In the United States the term "American" has two meanings: (1) one of national identity; and (2) that ethnic category of citizens who are tokens of the identity, i.e., not members of any other of the many "foreign" ethnic groups. The national language, is the language identity of this group. In Latin America, on the other hand, the inclusive term

for national identity -Peruano, Bolivano, Ecuatoriano- does not correspond to any of the terms designating the narrower ethnic identities. Also, the language identities for national identity are multiple. That is, Spanish, Quechua, Aimara, etc. are Peruanos, Ecuatorianos, and Bolivianos.

The existence in Latin America of the socio-ethnic category mestizo, the social product of españoles (a category which no longer is present in Latin American society) and nativos contrasts with the United States situation. In the United States there is no socio-ethnic category of persons which is the "social product" of two or more other categories. Although the word mestizo does occur in English, it is a term for a "racial" category with no socio-ethnic implications. That is, in the United States, a person who is a racial mestizo has the ethnic identity of one or the other parent.

## IV. Implications for Long-Term Effects or Results of Bilingual Programs

In the previous sections we have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which the socio-cultural attitudes which members of language communities have towards language codes and their use is a factor of overwhelming importance in determining the stance taken toward national bilingual education programs. Let us now discuss the implications for long-term effects or results of these programs as facets of the wider and ongoing language contact situations.

These results can be considered in terms of two dimensions: (1) the final linguistic state of the societies, in terms of whether it is to be bilingual or monolingual; and (2) the degree of mutual versus unidirectional influence of the languages involved.

In the United States, bilingual education programs have as their aim

facilitating a transition from monolingualism in a non-English language through bilingualism on an individual level to ultimate English monolingualism on the community level. Bilingualism is seen as transitional with the ideal end being English monlingualism for the entire population.

In Latin America, the aim of the bilingual education programs as officially stated, is not to produce a nation of monolingual Spanish speakers, but rather one of the bilingual Spanish-Quechua speakers. To those who might argue that such a situation is not a stable one-- that there will inevitably be a stress toward a Spanish monolingualism-- we can cite those instances of currently-existing bilingual nation-states in the world, particularly those of Europe. Given that: (1) a significant minority of the population in Latin America is currently Quechua monolingual and another large minority is Quechua-Spanish bilingual, (2) the contexts in which Spanish is learned and used for most bilingual speakers are public ones, while Quechua remains for "private" contexts, and (3) there is no derogation of Quechua usage, it seems reasonable to expect that bilingual usage on the basis of different social functions for each code-- much like the Swiss situation-- may continue for a long time. Comparative figures from the 1961 and 1972 censuses in Latin America present striking evidence that current language shifts are not in the direction of increasing Spanish monolingualism.

However, even should the ultimate (after how many years?) language scene in Latin America become one of Spanish monolingualism, the nature of the monolingualism would be quite different from the monolingualism in the United States. From the evidence available, it appears that, unlike English in the United States, Spanish in Perú, Ecuador and Bolivia has

been and continues to be extensively influenced by Quechua (Minaya 1976, Muysken and Stark 1977, Escobar 1978).

In the United States, it is a striking social fact that the non-English languages in the various contact situations have had almost no influence on English. This has been because of the attitudes toward language use in conjunction with the direction of bilingualism, i.e., monolingual English speakers in contact with bilingual speakers of a native-language-plus-English.

In Latin America, bilingualism has proceeded in both directions, that is, there is both native-Spanish-plus-Quechua-as-a-second-language bilingualism and native Quechua-plus-Spanish-as-a-second-language bilingualism. The result has been that a distinctive national language has emerged in each of the three countries: Peruvian, Bolivian or Ecuadorian Spanish. It is a variant of a more universal Spanish which consists of a range of styles, each differentially manifesting syntactic, phonological and lexical influence from Quechua.

In conclusion, the aim of the bilingual education programs in both the United States and Latin America is the social integration of members of ethnic groups who have in the past at least been partially socially disenfranchised. However, the differences in the bilingual education programs in the two societies, growing out of attitudes toward bilingualism versus monolingualism on the part of the socially-dominant group in each society, reveals that each feels is required in order to achieve that integration. In Latin America, social integration is being achieved by extending higher status to the culturally second language; a process which simultaneously broadens the definition of socially-human person. In the

United States, on the other hand, the establishment and operation of bilingual education programs has largely proceeded on the assumption that one can only be a "real" member of American society by becoming a monolingual English speaker, thus giving up one's native language and ethnic identity.

We can see from this comparison of the historical determinants of the attitudes in the United States toward non-English speakers that, since this attitude does not occur in all other societies, it is not a logically-necessary adjunct to bilingual education programs. What would happen in the United States bilingual education programs if the monolingual and bilingual non-English speakers in our communities were not seen as "lesser Americans" and "linguistically disadvantaged"? What expansions in our thinking about ourselves as members of a national community would take place if we saw the native speakers of other languages in our communities as bringing a valuable resource to be shared in realizing the potential of the next generation for becoming multilingual in the other important languages of the world?

## NOTES

1. On this paper, I will concentrate on those bilingual education programs serving minority groups within each country.

2. The Peruvian legal frameworks for bilingual education are part of the 1972 General Law of Education. The Bolivian movement was supported by the 1976 Conclusions and Recommendations, First Seminar on Sociolinguistics and Education, Ministry of Education and Culture. Likewise, the Ecuadorian legal perspectives were supported by the 1976 Seminar on Educational Research, Central University, Quito.

3. The Governments, through the Ministries of Education and Regional Offices, conduct Seminars to account for the sociolinguistic and educational situation before establishing bilingual programs in a determined area.

4. Research reconnaissance activities are usually conducted by personnel of the Central Ministry of Education and members of the local community.

5. In Ecuador, the term Quichua is also used as alternative of Quechua.

6. The first three criteria for the selection of bilingual teachers may vary in the three Latin American Countries in that non-native but fluent speakers of Quechua and Aimara are also considered; a teacher may have lived for a number of years, possess the cultural intuitions and qualify to teach; and the number of years of teaching experience is negotiable.

7. In Bolivia, the officialization of the first Quechua and Aimara alphabets date back to 1954 and 1968.

8. According to LaFontaine (1975), there is a clear distinction between Puerto Ricans and mainland United States citizens in that Puerto Ricans have resisted losing their identity as an ethnic group.

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